Principles of Sociology

in

ISLAM

Translated by.:
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TEHRAN-IRAN

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CONTENTS



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

INTRODUCTION

The vital factor in human society is fraternity and cordial relation between individuals.

The basic problem of the world today, is not of bread and butter but that of fellow feeling in individuals as well as in society.

How to maintain relations with each other is a problem which is worrying the countries of the world as well as the individuals. As regards

peaceful co-existence, neither any remedial measure could be adopted nor any result other than writing and discussion achieved in this field.

The flame of war is engulfing different parts of the world every day devastating human lives and rendering families helpless and destitute. Even minor differences and controversion arising between persons of one town, quarter or a family lead to such complications. To be exact, unless human relations based on faith and nationality are not created, this problem will remain unsolved and the disease incurable.

Islam which is divine heavenly code can solve this problem by culturing people through faith in God, purification of soul and preservation of humanity. Islam is a comprehensive code of life which if really followed may lead human society to zenith of glory. Islam wants to acquaint people with the fact that all human beings are offsprings of the same parents and that there is no class distinction between one

and another.

Black and white, colour and skin can never be criteria of greatness of one class over the other. Likewise difference in languages and style of speech cannot upgrade any nation.

According to Islamic law, the only criterion of individual or collective supremacy is faith and piety, knowledge and wisdom.

The Holy Qur'an clearly says:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَـٰكُم مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ
وَجَعَلْنَـٰكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓا إِنَّ
أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ ٱللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ...

O people, We created you from a male and a female and made you into clans and tribes so that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you . . . (49:13)

The Holy Qur'an further elaborates:

...يَرْفَعِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ...

. . . Allah raises in rank those of you who believe and who have been given knowledge . . . (58:11)

The Holy Prophet said:

لَا فَخْرَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى

There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab except by piety.

If this fact is accepted by the people it will bury deep differences and controversies and create feeling of fraternity in them. This system will eradicate enmity at family, international, universal and at all levels.

The aim of this discussion is to teach Muslims, the principles of Islamic sociology which could knit and benefit them in their mutual social dealing and maintenance of cordial relations.

Majority of people having friends and social contacts are unaware of the basic principles of sociology which forces them to life of isolation with no way out.

Maintenance of cordial relations and balance in every walk of life is a vital subject itself.

There are persons of unusual lovely nature which attracts people wherever they move.

We also find another group of unnoticed simpletons. Why this difference? Is a question which we can probably reply by saying that since creation and nature of people is different, hence personalities make persons attractive or otherwise. While disagreeing with this reply, the experts plead that courtesy, virtue and personal qualities earn popularity or disaffection for them.

Such people have sensible approach and discharge mutual obligations diligently, in order to gain affection and love from others.

1. RESPECT OF HUMAN BEINGS

One of the vital points in social life is regard to the dignity of human beings which is an integral part of Islamic jurisprudence, and the great leaders of Islam have paid due attention to it. The Holy Prophet emphasized human respect as a part of his mission.

كَانَ (ص) يُكْرِمُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى رُبَّمَا بَسَطَ
ثَوْبَهُ وَيُؤْثِرُ الدَّاخِلَ بِالْوِسَادَةِ الَّتِي تَحْتَهُ.

He (the Holy Prophet) used to respect every one who entered, so much so that many a times he put his robe under him for sitting and gave his own pillow for support. *(Biharu'1-anwar, vo1.6)*

Once, while the Holy Prophet was sitting alone in the mosque, a person entered and came towards him. The Holy Prophet got up and vacated his seat for him. The new - comer asked: "O Messenger of Allah! The mosque is vacant and there is ample space. Why you stepped back?" The Holy Prophet said: "It is one of the rights of a Muslim upon another Muslim that when one wishes to sit near the other, the latter should step back as a token of respect to him." *(ibid.)*

If many people sat before the Holy Prophet, he in order to maintain the respect of all, used to look at all of them with equal frequency. *(ar-Rawdah* of *al-Kafi)*

When the Holy Prophet came to sitting,

he sat wherever there was an empty space, and he did not care whether it was the place of honour or otherwise.

When he sat with his companions in the mosque or any other place, people sat in circle so that the sitting had no distinguished place of honour and all were equal.

If any stranger came to the sitting of the Holy Prophet, he could not know who was the Holy Prophet because the Holy Prophet did not occupy any place of honour; the new comer had to ask who among them was the Holy Prophet.

The round tables which are now standard fixtures of political and other conferences in the world, are a sample of the sitting of the Holy Prophet. But there is a big difference. The round tables of today have an aim which is diametrically opposed to the aim of the round sitting of the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet adopted the sitting in circle because he did not like to sit in a higher

place with others sitting below him. But the round tables of today have been adopted because none of the participants likes anyone to sit in a higher place and is not ready to sit in less distinguished place.

The Holy Prophet, with full moral force, was looking for the ways to root out the class distinctions and racial differences and other such things.

He always tried to abolish the wrong criteria which people had adopted for false superiority. He established the genuine and correct criterion of superiority based on spiritual and moral foundations.

The respect, the Holy Prophet showed for others attracted and absorbed people in him. Humanity was benefited by the Prophet.

The Holy Prophet clearly said:

بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

I have been sent to perfect the noble character.

During his reign, once Imam `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) * was travelling outside Kufah, a non-Muslim who did not recognize him became his travel companion from a place. "Where are you going?" He asked. "To Kufah" `Ali (a.s.) replied. At a junction where their paths parted, the non-Muslim proceeded to his way, but to his utter surprise, he saw `Ali (a. s.) following him. "Are you not going to Kufah?" He questioned. "Why?" Asked 'All (a.s.). "It is the other path which leads to Kufah." "I know", `Ali (a.s.) replied. "Then why did you deviated from your route?" He asked. Imam `Ali (a.s.) said: "For the amicable parting of the company, it is obligatory on a man to follow few steps with his fellow traveller as a token of respect

* (a. s.) : is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *'alay-hi/ha/himu's-salam* (may peace be upon him/her/them).

before bidding good-bye and this ethic has been taught to us by our Holy Prophet." This affection and respect impressed the non-Muslim very much, and he asked: "Did your Prophet give you such code of conduct?" "Yes", replied 'Ali (a.s.). The non-Muslim said: "Those who accepted the Prophet of Islam and followed his footsteps, were enchanted by this moral teaching and nobility." Then he changed his route and accompanied 'Ali (a. s.) to Kufah, had discussion about Islam with him and finally became Muslim. *(Biharu '1-anwar, vo1.74)*

Respect of others occupies such significant place in principles of social life that Allah emphasized it to the Prophet of Islam:

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ...

And say to my servants that they should only say those things that are best . . . (Qur'an, *17: 53)*

The fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

عَظِّمُوا أَصْحَابَكُمْ وَوَقِّرُوهُمْ وَلَا يَتَهَجَّمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ .

> Respect and pay regards to your friends and never confront each other disrespectfully. *(Biharu '1-anwar, vo1.74)*

The Holy Prophet of Islam said:

لَا تُحَقِّرَنَّ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنَّ صَغِيرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللهِ كَبِيرٌ .

> Do not look down upon anyone of the Muslims because even a humble Muslim is great before Allah. *(ibid.)*

Indifference towards friends is against courtesy and this wrong attitude shakes the foundation of friendship, creates heart-breaking.

`Ali (a.s.) said:

لا تضيّعنّ حقّ أخيك اتّكالاً على ما بينك
وبينه فإنّه ليس لك بأخٍ من ضيّعت حقّه

Do not neglect the right of your brother, trusting the relation between you and him (i.e., thinking that the relationship between you and him is above such requirements) because the person whose right you have neglected, is not your brother. (ibid.)

Ignoring the people, abusing and humiliating them is condemnable attitude because ridiculing and hatred are the two acts which can never win friends.

Aristotle said: For preservation of friendship, the friends should recognise status and pay due regard to each other.

If two friends do not recognise and respect each other, there is no possibility of cordial relation and sincere friendship between them.

Courtesy costs nothing, but pays a lot. One can achieve through courtesy what he cannot do through gold and silver.

Once a man, named az-Zuhri*, came to the fourth Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (a. s.) with gloomy face. The Imam asked him the reason of his sadness. az-Zuhri said:

"O son of the Messenger of Allah, sorrow and distress are attacking me from all sides. On one hand, the envious people, cannot see my comfort and well-being, make me sad by their behaviour. On the other hand, the enemies and ill-wishers cause me distress. Above all, the people to whom I had done some good turn and expected friendship and love from them are creating obstacles in my way."

* Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Abdillah ibn Shihab az-Zuhri (58/678 - 124/742), one of the great scholars and narrators of traditions of his time. (ed.)

The Imam said: "O az-Zuhri, keep your tongue under control, and do not say whatever comes to your mind, lest you lose your friends and turn them into enemies."

az-Zuhri : "O son of the Messenger of Allah? I do them a good turn by the words I tell them."

The Imam: "It is not so. Resist from saying a thing which the minds of people are not ready to accept."

Then the Imam said: "O az-Zuhri, a man whose mind is not mature, may get doomed by even small things."

Thereafter, the Imam gave him a code of conduct, so that by following it he may not get distressed by the behaviour of the people. The Imam told him

"O az-Zuhri, is it really difficult if you deem all Muslims like your family members and dependants? Elders like your father, youngers like your children and contemporaries like your brothers. When you will think about them in

these terms, then whom would you like to be unjust to? Whom would you curse? Whom would you want to dishonour?

"O az-Zuhri, if you think that you are better than a certain person, then discipline yourself in this way. If he is older than you, you should tell yourself: 'He is my senior in Islam and faith and has done more good deeds.'

"And if he is younger than you, then think in these terms: `He has done sins less than I.' And if he is of your own age, then say to your self: `I know my own sins and have no knowledge about his sins.'

"If people respect you, think that it is because of their own generosity, and if they show discourtesy, say that it is because of your own sins.

"If you follow this code, life will become sweet for you and you will get many many friends and the rank of your enemies will de crease. Also do not forget that people show more respect to a man whose benefit reaches

more to them and who expects nothing from them." *(Bihdru '1-anwar, vol. 74)*

The above description is one of the top secrets of social life in Islam with regard to Human respect and discharge of duties. There are many Qur'anic injunctions and *ahadith* (traditions) concerning this subject and some of them are mentioned below.

2. MERCY AND KINDNESS TO PEOPLE

Mercy and kindness occupy an important place in the Islamic social code. The Holy Qur'-an, narrates courtesy of the last Prophet in the following words

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ لِنتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنتَ فَظًّا
غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ...

It is by some mercy of Allah that thou (O Prophet) *art gentle to them; hadst thou been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered from about thee. (3:159)*

This Qur'anic verse clarifies that benevolence and kindness of the Holy Prophet to all was one of the reasons of people's attraction towards him. People are fed up of discourteous and harsh persons and certainly such persons are the victims of their own bad nature. As omission and unwanted errors are routine of the society, same may be overlooked and retaliation avoided.

سُئِلَ أبو عَبْدِ اللهِ (ع) ما حَدُّ حُسْنِ الخُلُقِ ؟
قالَ: تُلينُ جَناحَكَ وتُطيِّبُ كَلامَكَ وتَلْقى
أخاكَ بِبِشْرٍ حَسَنٍ .

The sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) was asked: "What is the definition of good manner?" The Imam said: "Keeping your wings soft, (i.e., behaving benevolently and courteously) , talking sweetly and virtuously and meeting your fellow brethren with happy and smiling face. *(Bihdru 'l-anwar, vol.74)*

Imam `Ali (a. s.) in his will to his son, Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) said:

إِحْمِلْ نَفْسَكَ مِنْ أَخِيكَ عِنْدَ صَرْمِهِ عَلَى الصِّلَةِ
وَعِنْدَ صُدُودِهِ عَلَى اللَّطَفِ وَالْمُقَارَبَةِ، وَعِنْدَ
جُمُودِهِ عَلَى الْبَذْلِ وَعِنْدَ تَبَاعُدِهِ عَلَى الدُّنُوِّ
وَعِنْدَ شِدَّتِهِ عَلَى اللِّينِ، وَعِنْدَ جُرْمِهِ عَلَى
الْعُذْرِ، حَتَّى كَأَنَّكَ لَهُ عَبْدٌ، وَكَأَنَّهُ ذُو نِعْمَةٍ
عَلَيْكَ، وَإِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَضَعَ ذَلِكَ فِي غَيْرِ مَوْضِعِهِ،
أَوْ أَنْ تَفْعَلَهُ بِغَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ.

Bear yourself towards your brother in such a way that if he disregards kinship you keep to it; when he turns away be kind to him and draw near to him; when he withholds spend for him; when he goes away approach him; when he is harsh be lenient; when he commits wrong think of (his) excuse for it, so much so as though you

are a slave of him and he is the benevolent master over you. But take care that this should not be done inappropriately, and that you should not behave so with an undeserving person. *(Nahju '1-balaghah,* Commandment no. 31)

Short temperament and engulfing people in flame of anger leads to failure and less of friends.

It is true to cut the evil-doers into their sizes but wisdom discards this theory due to the reason that precaution and reform with iron hand is impossible. The Holy Qur'an says that when Allah sent Moses and his brother to warn Pharaoh, they were advised in these words:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ ﴿

And speak gently to him, that haply he may be mindful, or perchance fear. (20:44)

Dale Carnage says: "If you burn into anger and use filthy language, it means you have exhausted yourself. Does your opponent anyhow participate in your task? Will your blunt tone and unwanted attitude facilitate his job and make him your partner? "

Woodroe Wilson says: "If you approach me with fist, be sure to be replied in the same coin; but if you come to sit together and dis cuss on even controversial matters, I will sort out the cause of differences and will try to minimize the same immediately. In many cases, the differences were just nominal whereas we agreed on maximum points. Only through rational oixtlook, sincerity and accomodative attitude, we may patch up differences."

Once while the fourth Imam, `Ali ibn al-Husayn (Zaynu 'l-`Abidin - a.s.) was sitting at his place with people of various school of thoughts, a man entered and out of malice abused the Imam, and then went away. A little after, the Imam spoke with the audience. "Did

you witness how this fellow misbehaved and abused me? Now, I want to go to him with you to answer him." Every one was willing for this job. The associates followed the Imam with the idea that the Imam would certainly put him to task, but were surprised to hear the Imam reciting this Qur'anic verse:

...وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ❋

. . . The men of piety are those who restrain anger and forgive people, for Allah loves those who do good. (3:134)

They knew that the Imam did not want to take revenge. On reaching his house, they called him. Being sure that the Imam with his party had come for revenge, he came out duly prepared to face the situation. However, unexpectedly, he found the Imam with smiling face. The Imam told him: "Shortly, you came to me and said this and that. Now I have come

just to tell you that if you were right in those words and I really possess the evils pointed out by you, I pray to Allah to forgive me, and to pardon my bad conduct; and if you had told lies and blamed me for things which are not in me, then I pray to Allah to pardon you and forgive your sin." This noble behaviour disarmed that man and he apoligized to the Imam in these words:

"O son of the Messenger of Allah! You do not have any of the evils which I had spoken; instead it is I who deserve all those words." Through this sensible approach, the Imam converted his bitter enemy into his friend and also taught practical lesson of forgiveness to his disciples.

This lesson is a golden addition in the book of society and teachings of Islam and is obligatory on the followers of the Qur'an to adopt this virtue in order to be benefited by its useful fruits.

3. HUMILITY AND POLITENESS

One of the important principles of sociology bearing useful fruits and creating popularity is humility and politeness.

Politeness not only distinguishes a man but in addition gains popularity for him and makes him beloved in the eyes of people. Arro gance and vanity is the quality which earns disaffection and disregard from others and sows the seeds of enmity in hearts.

While praising the courteous people, the *Holy Qur'an* says:

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ
هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ۞

And the servants of (Allah) *Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace". (25:63)*

The lives of the Holy Prophet and his progeny (*Ahlu 'l-Bayt)* were also based on these principles. They mixed and assembled with the poor and suppressed, shared their meals and treated them brotherly. The Holy Prophet himself reprimanded the arrogant people and taught them the lesson of humility and politeness.

One day when the Holy Prophet was sitting in the mosque and his companions were sitting around him, a poor Muslim, wearing old clothes, came in and, according to the Islamic custom (that when someone comes to a gathering, he

should sit wherever there is a vacant place, without any thought that he should be given a special place according to his supposed status) looked around, found a vacant space, went there and took his seat. Prechance, on his side was a rich man. That rich man, apparently did not like a poor man sitting at his side and gathered his robe and pulled himself a little apart from that poor fellow.

The Holy Prophet who was observing his behaviour, asked him:

"Were you afraid that some of his poverty would stick to you?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah! "

"Were you afraid that some of your riches would go over to him?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah! "

"Were you afraid that your clothes would become dirty by his touch?"

"No, O Messenger of Allah! "

"Then why did you gather yourself up and did injustice to him and pulled yourself away? "

"O Messenger of Allah! I confess that I committed a sin, and now to correct this mistake and remove this sin, I am ready to offer half of my wealth to this Muslim brother of mine."

Hearing this, the poor man said: "O Messenger of Allah! I am not ready to accept this offer." The Prophet asked: "Why? " He replied: "I do not want to become proud and selfish, under the influence of wealth, and to behave one day with one of my Muslim brethren as this man has behaved with me." (al- Usul of al-Kaffi)

Plato (Aflatun) says: The best way to gain friendship is humility and politeness. The great thinkers of Islam further elaborate this point.

Arrogance is the enemy of friendship. Anyone having complex in mind and vanity in walk casts' out his well-wishers and minimizes his friends. On the contrary, the benevolent and polite person attracts friends. The selfish cannot gain friends, because people do not tolerate arrogance.

Muhaddith-e Qummi says: "Selfishness and egotism of people have some outwardly signs: A proud and self-centred man always thinks that he is great while others are little and despised; does not like to stand on equal level with others; wants to walk ahead of others, to sit in a higher and distinguished place; expects others to salute him; if somebody advises him, he becomes angry; and if he advises others uses harsh language, and if his advice is not accepted becomes furious; if he teaches he insults his pupils, and treats them as his servants." *(Safinatu '1-bihar*, vo1.2, p.459)

Now see, how a man having such behaviour can create friends, or people may learn towards such person. That is why the Qur'an has clearly condemned selfishness and conceit

... أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ *

. . . *Is there not in Hell an abode for the haughty? (39:60)*

Similar views have also been expressed by the sixth Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.)

> There is an abode of excessive torture in Hell reserved for the arrogant people.

The Holy Qur'an narrates the useful teachings of Lugman to his son in which he inter alia, says:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ۝

> And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence *through* the earth, for Allah loves not any arrogant boaster. (31:18)

The sixth Imam explains that pride is based on inferiority complex. He says:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَتِيهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ذِلَّةٍ يَجِدُهَا فِي نَفْسِهِ

> No one shows haughtiness and pride but because of some inferiority which he feels in himself. (Usul of al -Kaffi , vol. 3)

After thorough studies on this subject of arrogance, the authorities have endorsed the above ideas and further explained:

The sense of superiority in one person or a nation amounts to segregation and hatred of other. Enmity, controversy and present disputes are all the products of this theory of hatred.

This way of thinking is actually the result of the false prestige and feeling between himself and the others.

In light of the above facts, humility and politeness are one of the fundamental principles of sociology and as already told, in Islamic teachings it has been emphasized for the people to avoid conceit and complex and win the favour of people and pleasure of Allah through politeness.

4. FULFILMENT OF PROMISE

As a natural instinct, man feels committed to discharge his obligations towards others and fulfilment of promise.

It is therefore obligatory on the followers of every school of thought to fulfil their commitments and condemn non-fulfilment of promise and breach to trust.

Man is bound to discharge obligations in social life because reliability makes man dependable. In other words, it is one of the noble deeds to honour commitments in every walk of life.

Any commitment between two parties must be honoured, no matter the contract is small and free of legal bindings.

The Qur'an regards fulfilment of promise as a part of belief and one of the qualities of the believers

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ
خَاشِعُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ...
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ *

The believers are successful, those who humble themselves in their prayers, who refrain from vain talk . . . those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants. (23:1-8)

Another Qur'anic verse says

...وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا...

. . . (Righteous are) *those who fulfil the contracts which they have made . . . (2:177)*

The Holy Prophet in one of his talks said:

مَنْ عَامَلَ النَّاسَ فَلَمْ يَظْلِمْهُمْ وَحَدَّثَهُمْ فَلَمْ
يَكْذِبْهُمْ وَ وَعَدَهُمْ فَلَمْ يُخْلِفْهُمْ فَهُوَ مِمَّنْ
كَمُلَتْ مُرُوءَتُهُ وَظَهَرَتْ عَدَالَتُهُ وَوَجَبَتْ أُخُوَّتُهُ

One who dealt with people and did not do injustice to them; and talked with them and did not tell lies to them; and made a covenant with. them and did not break it, such a person is a perfect gentleman; and his probity is known (and accepted) and his brotherhood is worth seeking. (*Biharu '1-anwar, vol. 75*)

And the fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

ثَلَاثٌ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ ٱللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ لِاَحَدٍ فِيهِنَّ رُخْصَةً :
أَدَاءُ الاَمَانَةِ إِلَى الْبَرِّ وَ الْفَاجِرِ وَالْوَفَاءُ
بِالْعَهْدِ لِلْبَرِّ وَ الْفَاجِرِ وَبَرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ بَرَّيْنِ
كَانَا اَوْ فَاجِرَيْنِ .

There are three things in which Allah has not given any option to anyone (i.e., they are compulsory; nobody can avoid them) (a) Returning back the trust, whether the principle be pious or debauchee; (b) fulfilling the promise, whether it was made to a good man or evil; and (c) being good to the parents, whether the parents be pious or not. (al-Usul of al-Kafi`, vol. 2)

Fulfilment of promise creates reliability and helps organizing different facets of life. Indifference and breach of trust leads to disorganization and even obstruction in functions.

Anyone who deviates from the right path, breaks promise and dishonours his commitments, only creates hatred and enmity in the hearts of others.

Breach of trust results in disorganization of society and if allowed to continue leads the nation to doom and destruction.

Unfortunate are the persons who not only dishonour their obligations but adopt the habit of breach of trust and cheating as an inherent art of life. Although their actions are violation of all the moral and ethical codes and injurious to the society.

This was a very short description of Islamic teachings on social life of the Muslims. Without any doubt, each of the above codes has irresist ible influence on creating and maintaining true friendship.

Now,, we propose to remind the readers about the social manners of the Holy Prophet of Islam, so that we, Muslims may try to follow his footsteps.

The Prophet of Islam used to accept invitation of every person, whether he be a free man or slave, rich or poor.

If a man came to him with a request, he at once got up to fulfil his need.

He always accepted the excuses (and forgave the offenders), did not take revenge; instead overlooked the mistakes of others.

Wherever he came face to face with anyone, it was the Prophet who saluted first. He was always patient in face of the enmities of the enemies. He used to sit on earth, without any shade of pride. If necessary, he himself mended his shoes and clothes. Never showed haughtiness before anyone; used to visit the sick; even if they stayed far; ate with the poor and beggars on one table and used to look after them.

Never liked any distinguished cloth or food for himself; used to shake hands with Muslims and gently pressed their hands because of his love for them.

The most liked, in his sight, was the person who was. most helpful to his fellows. His gatherings portrayed forbearance, modesty, patience and trust. He respected the old and was considerate to the young. He was always cheerful and of courteous manner. He was not harsh; did not hate anyone; never shouted, nor uttered harsh and unreasonable words even for unbelievers and idol-worshippers; was never after the shame of the people; never cut the talk of anyone.

He asked about his acquaintances if they were absent. He never stretched his legs before any person; was very generous to all human beings; loved his relatives and used to look after them.

He was very strict in fulfilling his promises and covenants. If someone talked to him, he listened attentively and while listening he always turned towards the speaker with his whole body.

These are the examples of the character and manner of the Last Prophet of Allah, as has been mentioned by historians and traditionalists. Let us hope that all the Muslims would follow his examples and thus lead the world onto the path of moral perfection and sublime humanity.

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